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Atari Online News, Etc.
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I think I just figured out how the mood of my editorials are determined week
after week - it has to be relative to when I write them. If I start an
editorial during the week, I'm usually in a foul mood. If I write them on
Friday evening, just before our issue is completed and published, I'm in a
much better mood! It's Friday!

Over the years, I can remember complaining about my job and the various
stress incurred because of it. Well, a certain amount of stress is to be
expected in any job, especially one which can be fast-paced and full of
pressure. Well, I finally decided to do something about it. A new position
has been created in my department and I've thrown my hat into the ring. It
would be a good opportunity for me; and it would certainly help to reduce
stress. I'll keep you posted.

Spring is officially here, and the weather seems to bear it out. Finally,
the days are getting warmer, and longer. I'll be out in the yard in no
time. It's a great time of year!

So, what do you think will be the final outcome in the Microsoft antitrust
case? It appears that a settlement is the way this is headed. It will be
interesting to see what happens, as a result.

It's about time that authorities are going after online scams. Whether it
be these foolish pyramid schemes, or any of the other countless rackets
going on in the world. The internet is a perfect medium for these types of
scams due to the anonymity of the source. Now if there was a good way to
rid the world of telemarketers, I'd be in heaven!

Until next time...

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                        PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                      compiled by Joe Mirando
                       jmirando@portone.com

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. It seems that we are well and truly on
our way to spring... finally.

The funny thing is that I'm a "winter person". No, I don't ski or
snowmobile or anything, I'm just more at home in the cold weather. I
figure that if you get too cold you can always throw on another blanket.
But if you're too hot...

Anyway, we've got that article on Linux on the PC that I mentioned last
week. Take a look at it if you're interested in "alternative" operating
systems. There will be a follow-up article on Linux on the Atari, but
it's been hard to find the time to shoehorn everything into 24 hour days.

But take my word for it, it is in the works.

Well, let's take a look at what's going on with the UseNet folks.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
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Douglas Zander asks for help with his hard drive:

"Hello, I have a problem with my hard drive. I have an 520ST with tos
1.4 (Rainbow tos) and 720Meg hard drive with partitions C thru J. My
boot drive is the C: partition with a whole bunch of auto programs in
the auto folder, including "TOS14FIX.PRG", "POOLFIX3.PRG",
"CACHEXXX.PRG", "FOLDERXXX.PRG" as well as some fix for the serial port
called "HSMODEM6.PRG" IIRC. Originally, I had the order correct for
all the programs in the auto folder but then I copied them all out of
the auto folder and erased all the programs in the auto folder and then
copied them all back into the auto folder. Unfortunately, I failed to
copy them back in in the correct order. The drive boots and the desktop
appears with all the disk icons but then the mouse appears as a busy bee
and the C partition window doesn't appear.

I cannot get control of the computer and the mouse stays as a busy bee.
As the hard drive boots I see all the messages from the auto programs
and one of them says "use xxxx to fix!" but I forget what it says.

My question is, is it possible to boot up the system without running
any of the programs in the C drive's auto folder? If I was able to do
that, then I believe I could rearrange the order of the programs and
correct everything. I do not want to reformat or lose any data on my
hard drive."

John Logan tells Douglas:

"With more modern TOSs you can hold down CONTROL when booting. I have a
feeling you can't do that with 1.4 but what you can do is have a floppy
with a hard drive boot program in drive A and press ALT whenever the
drive access light goes on during boot. This will boot from floppy.
Then install a drive called C and you should be able to open it."

Steve Sweet adds:

"You don't make it obvious but do you realise that the XXX in the cache
and folder prog's need to be substituted with with the number of extra
folders required in the case of FOLDR, eg FOLDR200.PRG, and the number of
cache blocks required, I think its in blocks of 256 bytes eg,
cache64.prg. It's been a while since I've used this bunch of prgs, but if
I had to start with them i'd pick the order..

FOLDR200.PRG
CACHE64.PRG
TOS14FIX.PRG
POOLFIX3.PRG
HSMODEM6.PRG"

Here's a sad post from Martin Byttebier that took me completely by
surprise:

"Today I discovered that Katherine Ellis' homepage has been hacked by

some idiots who call themselves *pro-MagiC* lovers. This is the most
despicable act I ever have seem in Atari land. Why can _some_ MagiC
lovers or should I say *MagiC-morons* not accept the existence of
another OS? Where are the days that we Atarians were one happy family?

This is surely a very sad day for me."

Daniel Dreibelbis tells Martin:

"Like you I was equally shocked about what happened to Kellis' web
page. I am glad, though that Bengy Collins (who the scumbags had left
his URL for MagiC Online on the hacked page) has made clear he does
not condone or support what these idiots did. Who would have thought
that some Atarians would have stooped to sinclap's level?

I'd suggest that when her page is back up that we send letters of
support for her, to show that there are people in this community who
do care about her page and what she's done in her support of the
platform."

Dan Ackerman tells Daniel and Martin:

"I agree totally. This is one area where I never minded the
atari community not being up to date.

The really lame bit about this is that unlike people that hack a
company's web site etc, is that kellis had no control over the security
in use the web site. It was simply what the ISP provided. There are
lots of areas in the world where people are lucky enough to have a local
ISP let alone one that has up to date and modern security."

Chris Swinson asks:

"I don't want to seam ignorant but what's Kellis' web ???

Daniel tells Chris:

"http://kellis.atari.org.

She has a number of her own programs she's developed (many of which
work happily on most Ataris), icons, desktop pictures and links to a
variety of Atari sites."

Terry May asks:

"Do you know what they did aside from changing the opening page? Did
she lose her entire site, or just the opening? Hopefully she has good
backups."

George Crissman adds his own thoughts:

"What?? The number-one proponent of MiNT??
How DASTARDLY!!

... and what's the point, since the Milan II
will (apparently) ship with Magic AND MiNT
and well as singleTOS (your choice)?

Katherine -- don't let the turkeys get you
down!! You've got a lot of admirers out here

cheering you on!"

Very well put, George! I've learned a lot from Katherine over the past
few years. I've never met her in person, or even had a conversation with
her, but reading her replies to questions had, if not given me answers,
at least shown me where to look for the answers. I've missed her posts
recently, as I'm sure that others have. I along with many others wish
her the best of luck in getting the website back up and in tip-top shape.

Dan Ackerman posts this about CAB Overlay:

"CAB.OVL 1.4002

binary update available now at
http://www.netset.com/~baldrick/

Changes:

Authentication now aborts if too many failures on the same document.

Patch for handling servers that just return html files instead of http
headers. (This seems to have been part of the problem at least with the
connection reset crashes)."

William Sayers asks about his 520's memory:

"On my 520ST I thought I had the default 512k of RAM but it can
copy 720k floppies without swapping disks halfway, Whereas when
I use pacifist set up for 512k of RAM it stops halfway and switches
disks before switching back. So does the fact that my machine can
copy the 720's without swapping mean that it's been upgraded in the
past??"

Nicholas Bales tells William:

"Are you sure they are 720K disks? Early 520s had a single sided floppy
with the 360K capacity.

If you are in doubt, use the sysinfo utility from:
http://bales.online.fr/atari/files"

Well folks, that's it for this week. I know it's short but look at it
this way: Now you have more time to read the Linux article! <grin>

Till next time, keep your ears open and be ready to listen to what they
are saying when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - PlayStation2 DVD Flaw!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""   SimTheme Park for PSX! Worms64!
                                    BattleSphere Sells Out First Run!
                                    And much more!

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   - The Latest Gaming News!
  """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

                Sony Embarrassed by Another PlayStation2 Flaw

Japanese electronics giant Sony Corp. faced fresh embarrassment on Friday
when its new, hugely hyped PlayStation2 (PS2) game console revealed another
flaw, sending its share price sliding.

Sony's game making unit Sony Computer Entertainment (SCE) said it had found
users of PS2, launched two weeks ago in Japan amid huge publicity and
frenzied demand, could manipulate it to watch digital video disk (DVD)
software sold overseas.

That is in breach of an agreement among DVD player makers worldwide that
stipulates machines can only play domestically sold disks equipped with
disenabling codes.

''Film makers in Hollywood could file a lawsuit against the maker because
of violation of copyright," Hideyuki Irie, a Japanese director at
DVD-Forum, an industry body, told Reuters.

''Sony could be accused of selling DVD players whose functions on copyright
protection can be easily altered," he said.

Sony said the problem had been identified but played down the significance
of the second glitch in a week.

''We have not launched a recall or stopped shipments, although we can't
completely dismiss for now the possibility of a recall," an SCE spokesman
said.

Just a week ago, the world's second-largest consumer electronics maker
revealed another DVD-related problem on its PS2, saying it had received 340
complaints from clients about memory cards glitches that caused
malfunctions, such as erasing data or programs needed to playing the disks.

The number of reported problem memory cards had risen to 1,000 by Friday,
the spokesman said.

Concerns over the flaws sent Sony shares down to close at 1.37 percent, at
26,640 yen, recovering slightly from early losses.

''We have found a problem in that PS2 users can watch DVDs sold overseas
that are not supposed to be played on machines sold in Japan," another SCE
official said. Users can manipulate the software to change the regional
codes on disks, he said. SCE, Japan's top video game maker, has already
taken action to fix the problem by modifying the software of its consoles
to limit use of the DVD function, the spokesman said.

As early as next week, the company plans to start shipping PlayStation2

players with an upgraded utility software disk and memory card that will prevent users from changing the regional code, he added.

SCE said it would take appropriate steps to solve the problem on machines already shipped after consulting DVD-Forum, he added.

DVD players sold in Japan can usually only play disks with region code number two, which is also the code for Europe. There are six codes in all, with North America having code number one.

''These codes were created because of demands by Hollywood filmmakers who usually launch new movies in the United States first and in other regions later," DVD-FORUM's Irie said.

Since movie makers, major suppliers of DVD content, are extremely sensitive over copyright, fearing loss of revenue if audiences don't then bother to go to cinemas, DVD player manufacturers are anxious to avoid upsetting them, he said.

''The Sony issue may add to the difficulties in ongoing format negotiations between music providers and DVD manufacturers and could even bring a new demand from film makers to reinforce codings," Irie said.

Total shipments of PlayStation2, the successor to the blockbuster PlayStation game console, topped one million on Wednesday, only 12 days after its launch.

Sony plans to ship 1.4 million consoles by the end of this month and 500,000 a month from April.

''We are asking buyers to return memory cards or consoles for checks and repairs while at the same time investigating the reasons for the glitches," the spokesman said.

Electronic Arts Ships SimTheme Park for the PlayStation

Ten people just threw up on the roller coaster. There are twenty screaming kids waiting for a bathroom. On top of that the Dino Bounce just broke down! It's just another day of managing the park's front office when playing SimTheme Park. Electronic Arts and Bullfrog Productions Wednesday announced the release of SimTheme Park for the PlayStation game console system, a new 3D simulation game in the tradition of SimCity 3000 and the original Theme Park.

In SimTheme Park, players can create and operate the most exciting, attractive and feature-packed amusement parks their imaginations can conjure. Unlike other titles in this category, SimTheme Park allows players to ride their creations and experience them from a first-person perspective. In addition, the PlayStation version offers a redesigned interface to take advantage of the PlayStation controls and several fun ''mini-games" that can be enjoyed throughout the park. While building the theme park of their dreams, players can take time out and try their hand at Dino Racing, the Strength Test, Smash 'Em, Shooting Gallery, Fortune Teller, Giant Puzzle and Coconut Shy.

Players construct their parks based on one of four different themes: Space Zone, The Lost Kingdom, Land of Wonders and Halloween. Each themed area

features a variety of rides, concessions and attractions from which to choose. A simple and intuitive user interface allows players to jump right in and start building. Players can create amazing roller coasters and log flumes with the flexible track-building interface, as well as exciting go-kart tracks and water-rapids complete with crossovers, jumps and tunnels. An advisor gives instant feedback to help create a successful theme park.

After designing the most gut-wrenching roller coasters imaginable, players can take their thrilling creations for a test drive to judge whether they need more loops, steeper drops or faster turns.

Aside from building fun rides, players must keep their park visitors happy in a number of other ways. They need to make sure admission prices cover operating expenses, staffing is adequate, restroom facilities are sufficient and that rides aren't too intense to be enjoyed -- all while staying on budget. To supplement park income, players can build shops and kiosks and set up sideshows. Every aspect of running the park is at the player's fingertips.

SimTheme Park carries an ESRB rating of ''E" for everyone. It is available in stores now for a suggested retail price of US $39.95 or by direct order from the EA StoreSM at http://www.store.ea.com or by calling 800-245-4525. More information on SimTheme Park can be found on the Internet at www.simthemepark.com.

Infogrames North America, Inc. Attacks
Nintendo 64 With Worms: Armageddon

Whether you like yours drenched in ketchup and mustard, deep fried in butter and cornmeal or blown to smithereens with a flying sheep bomb, you can cook up some fat, juicy grubs with Infogrames North America Inc.'s latest release, Worms: Armageddon for Nintendo 64, hitting store shelves this week. The game packs the strategy and action of a sophisticated war scenario into a fun-filled, hilarious and sometimes misguided battalion of angst-ridden worms.

As in previous versions of the Worms series, Worms: Armageddon is a turn-based strategy game, where teams battle across bizarre, randomly generated landscapes or finely crafted custom designed levels. Players have a set amount of time to make a move with their army of worms before the game automatically switches to the next team, giving the players time to conjure up their next maneuver by choosing from a nearly endless arsenal of madcap weapons. In addition, the random terrain generator makes it so that no multi-player game of Worms: Armageddon is ever the same, making game-play virtually endless.

''Worms: Armageddon combines strategy and comedy in a way that makes it one of the most entertaining games on the market," said David Riley, director of marketing for Infogrames North America, Inc.'s Action and Strategy Label. ''The 4-player multi-player capacity of the Nintendo 64 is the perfect platform for this type of turn-based strategy game and will provide hours of laugh-out-loud fun and in-depth strategic action to Worms fans and their friends. It's addictive, hysterical, ingenious fun." Worms: Armageddon features an in-depth single player option and intense multi-player action. Players either compete against a computer opponent, or take turns blasting friends. Other options include using the wind as a tool

in shooting accuracy, selecting the energy level for each worm, determining the amount of worms on a team, and choosing from a variety of different weapons. Players can choose from such creatively destructive weapons as bazookas, which wreak havoc on worms and the surrounding landscapes, to exploding sheep, top-secret furry friends that relentlessly run toward the enemy worm and detonate on command.

Developed by Infogrames' Lyon Studios, Worms: Armageddon is available for Nintendo 64 at an estimated retail price of $49.95 and can be found at most major retail outlets.

Electronic Arts Laces Up Its Skates for the First Ever RollerJam Game for the PlayStation

Bust out your spandex and lace up those in-line skates, Electronic Arts revealed plans to bring the action packed sport of RollerJam from the World Skating League (WSL) to the PlayStation video game system. RollerJam will allow gamers to race around the track as their favorite RollerJam stars, perform signature moves and pass other skaters in pursuit of points to win the coveted Founders Cup. Players will be able to choose from stars of the five popular hard-hitting RollerJam teams including the California Quakes and New York Enforcers.

''The sport of RollerJam is an exciting and entertaining experience that lends itself well to a video game,'' says executive producer Steve Sims, Electronic Arts. ''We are thrilled to bring RollerJam to PlayStation fans.''

Gamers will be able to play as any of the stars from the five WSL teams -- California Quakes, New York Enforcers, Florida Sundogs, Nevada Hot Dice and Illinois Riot. Each player comes with his or her own signature move such as Sean Atkinson's ''Superman" and Mark D'Amato's ''Screamer." RollerJam will feature a variety of modes including a Season mode that will let players build the skills of their favorite skaters and save them for use in multiplayer competition. Also included in the game is a signature Pummel Time mode, where two skaters will battle it out with each other to settle the score. Other modes include a head-to-head multiplayer mode and a quick race mode.

RollerJam will slam and jam its way to the PlayStation in the summer of 2000.

RollerJam is a modern take on the classic Roller Derby format of throwing moves and passing other skaters for points. It is an up and coming hardcore sport that blends the fast-paced action of hockey with the power and showmanship of today's wrestling. Two teams consisting of six men and six women skate around an oval rink and battle it out for the lead position. In order to retain the lead, team members must score points through powerful attacks at high speeds. The result is an exciting sport that includes fast paced action and special moves that sometimes lead to extremely heated confrontations. WSL's RollerJam is televised every Friday on TNN, a CBS Cable Network.

Activision Sets the Stage for Mind-Blowing Skate Action with Tony Hawk's Pro Skater for the

Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color

Activision, Inc.'s highly anticipated Tony Hawk's Pro Skater for the Nintendo 64 and Game Boy Color will shred up retail shelves when the games ship in North America this week. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater for the Nintendo 64 will carry a suggested retail price of $49.99, and the Game Boy Color title will carry a suggested retail price of $29.95. Both titles have been rated ''E" (for Everyone) by the ESRB.

''The ultimate skateboarding experience, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater is a must-have title for any Nintendo 64 or Game Boy owner," says Mitch Lasky, executive vice president, Activision Studios. ''Now, more gamers and extreme sports enthusiasts will be able to experience the fun and adrenaline-pumping action of this critically acclaimed game."

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater for the Nintendo 64 features a sophisticated yet easy-to-learn trick and combo system that allows players to perform hundreds of combination moves in an effort to become the highest-rated skate champ. Players choose from Tony Hawk and nine top-ranked skaters as they tear through real-world tracks, performing signature tricks with the speed and agility of the seasoned skate pros. An added feature for the Nintendo 64 version is the tutorial practice screen for each character and their trick sets, allowing players to perform more difficult moves.

Developed by Edge of Reality, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater for the Nintendo 64 also offers several modes of play. The two-player split-screen trick attack mode gives skaters the ability to interact with other players while competing on ramps and in skateparks for style points, racing between various obstacles on the tracks or playing a brutal game of tag. Also featured are two additional multiplayer modes, including S-K-A-T-E (skaters' version of basketball's H-O-R-S-E) and Graffiti mode in which two players ''tag" different obstacles in an environment by pulling big tricks off of them. The game also features a replay mode where players can view the highlights of each run.

Developed by Natsume, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater for the Game Boy Color also offers multiple modes of play, including tournament, half-pipe and race mode. The game's tournament mode allows players to skate as one of ten characters, competing against one of three opponents on a variety of street courses. The half-pipe mode challenges players to pull off as many tricks and stunts as possible within a time limit. In the game's race mode, players can go head-to-head against an A.I. opponent or against a friend with the use of a link cable.

GOOD DOGGIE! MDK2 Finals for the Sega Dreamcast

Interplay Entertainment Corp. announced Tuesday that Sega of America, Inc. has approved the highly anticipated sci-fi action thriller, MDK2, for the Sega Dreamcast. Now in duplication, this gorgeously constructed title may begin to hit store shelves as early as the end of this month.

Developed by BioWare Corp., the team that brought you 1998's ''Best RPG of the Year, Baldur's Gate," MDK2 expands upon the legacy of action, intrigue and humor established by its predecessor, MDK. Players will return to the strange, dark and kooky world inhabited by Kurt Hectic, Max the robotic dog, and the eccentric Dr. Hawkins. The result will be a surreal and

cinematic romp through ten levels of vast 3D environments and engaging
storylines. MDK2 promises superlative graphic detail, stunning visuals and
dramatic gameplay.

''We're all very excited about MDK2," said Brian Fargo, chief executive
officer of Interplay. ''It accurately represents the type of high-quality
console title that consumers will be seeing a lot more of from Interplay."
As the sequel to the award-winning MDK, MDK2 hosts an array of dynamic new
features and gaming technology. It makes full use of the Sega Dreamcast's
high performance graphics, audio and CPU technology, while offering players
a standard of quality that redefines the experience of console gaming.

Take a Spin with Walt Disney World Quest-Magical Racing Tour

Eidos Interactive is sprinkling the pixie dust on its newest PlayStation
video game Walt Disney World Quest-Magical Racing Tour shipping now to
stores nationwide.

Developed by Eidos' internal studio Crystal Dynamics, the easy-to-play,
colorful multi-player cart-style racing adventure is the first video game
based on Walt Disney World Resort.

Combining an engaging storyline with compelling gameplay, a few of Disney's
beloved characters, and some Disney classic attractions and water parks as
settings, Walt Disney World Quest-Magical Racing Tour provides hours of
quality family fun and entertainment.

Players race a variety of vehicles on 13 tracks based on popular Walt
Disney World Resort attractions from its theme parks and water parks
including: the Haunted Mansion from the Magic Kingdom Park; Rock 'n Roller
Coaster from the Disney Studios; the Test Track at Epcot; and Disney's
Blizzard Beach water park.

From the lovable Jiminy Cricket to the huggable chipmunks Chip 'n Dale,
players can choose from 13 characters in all, ten of which are new. All new
characters designed for the game by Disney artists include a spoiled duck
named Tiara Damage and a skateboarding, roller blading surfer dude named
Ned Shredbetter.

''Walt Disney World Quest-Magical Racing Tour has something for everyone,
from lovable Disney characters and fun cart-style racing to a setting based
on one of the most famous theme park destinations on earth," said Chip
Blundell, senior product marketing manager, Eidos Interactive. ''The new
title is for anyone who loves Walt Disney World."

The game starts when inquisitive chipmunks Chip n' Dale investigate the
famous theme park's fireworks machine, the mechanical contraption
responsible for Walt Disney World Resort's nightly shower of beautiful
fireworks. The trouble begins when Dale accidentally drops an acorn into
the machine. The fireworks machine breaks down, scattering pieces all over
the resort. In the game's one-player adventure mode, players must race each
track and finish in first place to earn back the nine different pieces of
the machine before nightfall. Single players can also test their driving
skills in additional pennant, trophy and bonus races. In the two-player
split-screen mode, players can compete against friends and family members
in three-lap races.

In both modes, adding to the excitement, racers can use different power ups such as spells (turn your opponent into a frog) or launch different items, such as acorns and teacups, to help them beat their opponents. Vehicle types include a rocket, pirate ship, snowmobile, and various other styles of cars. Adding to the ambiance, authentic music from the Disney library such as ``It's a Small World" and ``Zip-a-dee-doo-dah" accompanies each track.

Available in stores now for the PlayStation game console, Walt Disney World Quest-Magical Racing Tour will also be available on Sega Dreamcast and Game Boy Color this summer.

3DO Ships Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001 for PlayStation

The 3DO Company Wednesday announced that the Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001 game for the PlayStation game console began shipping this week to retail outlets throughout North America and online shopping sites. The Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001 game is the latest edition of the critically acclaimed baseball simulation.

This year, the Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001 game continues to offer the most immersive sports experience available without actually taking the field, with an improved, state-of-the-art, 3-D engine, true-to-life base running, fielding, and managing with TruPlay AI technology, and an extremely true-to-life pitcher-batter confrontation. Forty-five realistically crafted stadiums include classics such as Baker Bowl and Shibe Park, and an all-new ``smart" camera that takes you to the action like a top television producer would. The Action vs. Simulation setting lets the player decide how much real life stats influence in-game performance.

The Sammy Sosa High Heat Baseball 2001 game will be supported by a national marketing and public relations campaign featuring television, print, and online advertising starring Sosa.

Trip Hawkins, chairman and CEO of The 3DO Company, is the driving force behind the original High Heat game concept and the establishment of a development team dedicated to bringing the most realistic baseball experience to consumers. ``Baseball is very important to our culture. For years I have felt there should be a video game that is truly authentic in capturing the fun, the skills, the heroes, and the strategies of baseball," said Hawkins. ``With Sammy Sosa emerging as the leading hero for the game, 3DO is thrilled to have his endorsement of the High Heat Baseball game." Hawkins has penned a 28-page strategy guide on the finer points of our national pastime, which is included with every game.

Acclaim Entertainment Announces Three New Titles for the PlayStation 2

Acclaim Entertainment Tuesday announced its first of several video game releases for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. Acclaim will release its gold-standard sports title All-Star Baseball 2002 as well a new games based on the Ferrari Formula 1 and 360 Challenge series on the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system. Acclaim's upcoming games promise to take full advantage of the new hardware system's powerful

technology by featuring breath-taking graphics, immersive gameplay, and incredible digital sound.

Acclaim is currently developing several new games for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system to be released during the Company's fiscal year 2001 (Sept. 1, 2000 - Aug. 31, 2001).

As part of the Acclaim's PlayStation 2 strategy, Acclaim will develop new and unique character-based games that will be platform exclusive. ''We are dedicated to working closely with Sony Computer Entertainment to develop unique titles that take full advantage of this groundbreaking next generation system," said Greg Fischbach, co-chairman and CEO of Acclaim Entertainment

''We will vigorously support the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system with the introduction of new, exciting and high-quality titles during the launch period and ongoing. We will launch several new strong brands, such as Ferrari, and introduce Acclaim Sports titles leading with All Star Baseball 2002."

Officially licensed by Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, Acclaim's All-Star Baseball features award-winning gameplay and stunningly realistic graphics, and All-Star Baseball 2002 (Spring '01) for the PlayStation 2 computer entertainment system will be no exception. All-Star Baseball 2002 will feature a realistic physics-based engine and stunning graphics. For example, there are more polygons in each player's head than the number used to create an entire stadium in Acclaim's previous Nintendofi64 games. Acclaim will also develop and publish the most intensive, thrilling game to hit the racing sector, based on the Ferrari 360 Challenge, a car that was totally developed and conceived for racing. The Ferrari 360 Challenge was unveiled at the 1999 International Frankfurt Motor Show and has been described as one of the most significant sports cars ever to be built at Maranello.

Also as part of Acclaim's agreement with Ferrari, a Ferrari Grand Prix game is also under development for the PlayStation 2. The game will feature all the thrills and innovations of the Ferrari Formula 1 racing team. With its spectacular cars and its world-beating drivers, Ferrari, eight-time winner of the Formula 1 drivers' championship and nine times constructors' champions, is the most evocative name in Grand Prix racing.

Acclaim will announce more specific details on the upcoming games and provide a release schedule over the next several months.

Sega Dreamcast Scores with Virtua Striker 2

Sega of America announced Tuesday that ''Virtua Striker 2," the first soccer title to hit the 128-bit, Internet-ready Sega Dreamcast videogame console, is now available at retailers nationwide for $49.95. With thirty-two international teams, six world class arenas, and full stadium sound effects, ''Virtua Striker 2" sets the standard by delivering the most true-to-life gameplay ever to grace the digital soccer field.

''Before the arrival of the Sega Dreamcast, moving from arcade to console meant losing key aspects of a game," said Martha Hill, director of sports marketing for Sega of America. ''Sega Dreamcast has removed the element of compromise. Short of the scent of cut grass and the taste to sliced

oranges," `Virtua Striker' has it all.``

``Virtua Striker 2" recreates pro soccer's on-field action through
motion-captured moves, team specific attributes, individual team jerseys
and ultra-realistic 3D graphics. Like the pros, players can perform slide
tackles, headers and bicycle kicks, and watch dramatic goals again and
again from different camera angles with the instant replay feature.

The six stadiums in ``Virtua Striker 2" represent various styles of arenas,
from enormous championship-sized stadiums to intimate soccer venues. Each
is packed with chanting fans and colorful backdrops, recreating the frenzy
of pro soccer. As time passes in the real world, so it does in the ``Virtua
Striker 2" world, changing the Sega Dreamcast sky from day to night as the
game progresses. With the virtual time feature, time can be altered to
allow 24 hours of lighting to elapse in two hours.

Gamers can choose from arcade, international cup, tournament, league,
ranking and match play mode. Up to thirty-two players can participate in
the tournament mode, each gamer playing with one team.

``Virtua Striker 2" is now available at retailers nationwide and at
www.sega.com.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
   """""""""""""""""""""

March 15, 2000

For immediate release:

      Requests for BattleSphere Are Now Being Taken by ScataLOGIC Inc.

ScatoLOGIC Inc. has begun taking requests for the eagerly awaited
BattleSphere, the infamous game which recently rekindled interest in older
videogame systems.

In spite of the high costs of producing cartridges in small quantities,
ScatoLOGIC has announced that the price of the game will be the same $69.99
that mass produced games for the Jaguar originally listed for, and all
profits from sales are to be donated to diabetes research.

"By taking our time and carefully working out the details of purchasing
materials and manufacturing with companies who aren't out to gouge the
classic gaming community, we were able to keep our costs down to a level
which is the same as these cartridges were at when they were made in
large-scale runs." said Stephanie Wukovitz, ScatoLOGIC CTO. "We feel that
our new price point is the maximum reasonable price which people would be
willing to pay for a 32-Megabit cartridge game. Of course, even at this
price there will be a very nice profit left over for diabetes research."
added Douglas Engel, ScatoLOGIC COO. Scott Le Grand, ScatoLOGIC CEO also

added "We've had such great support from the gaming community that we put
extra effort into meeting this price goal."

Requests for the first batch of BattleSphere cartridges are now being
taken on the ScatoLOGIC/BattleSphere website. Go to
http://www.scatologic.com or http://www.battlesphere.com to place a
request.

BattleSphere is the awesome full 3D networked action shooter for the Jaguar.
The game was developed by renowned Jaguar, NUON, PSX2 and PC developer
4Play, which recently merged with ScatoLOGIC Inc. to form the newest
industry powerhouse development team.

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The following article appeared in the "LINUX ADVOCATE" section of the
March 17, 2000 issue of STReport (http://www.streport.com).

Linux: Chicken Soup for the CPU?

by Joe Mirando

For years I have been an opponent of most of Microsoft's operating system
offerings. I have always found them either too limited in their ability to
allow a user to quickly and easily do what they need to do, or too
complicated to allow them to do the same.

In either case, the user had to settle for what the operating system and
its creators could provide. Later incarnations of operating systems, in
addition to including the above-mentioned shortcomings, added massive
drains upon memory and processor power. For those willing to upgrade
computer equipment on a regular basis, this is not a major concern, but
it has always seemed odd to me that machines designed and marketed to
make our lives easier and more interesting should become part of the
"other side of the equation"... Now, in addition to having to juggle the
various responsibilities of our daily lives, we have added the necessity
of computer maintenance.

I have spent the lion's share of my computer time on one or another
16/32 bit Atari computer. I found the operating system, based on Digital
Research's GEM interface, to be quite intuitive, sophisticated, and easy
to use. While the Atari ST was once rated amongst the top echelon of
state-of-the-art computing technology, the company's inability or
unwillingness to keep pace with the rest of the computing world left
this wonderful line of machines largely forgotten and unlamented.

Although I've shunned Microsoft in my private life, that has not been
possible in my professional life. Businesses in general see Microsoft as
the top level of technology and seem comforted by the familiarity

afforded by Microsoft's advertising campaigns. The fact that I dislike Microsoft should not be interpreted as ignorance or a lack of familiarity with their products. Sometimes familiarity really does breed contempt.

I don't mind telling you that, although I also have a high-end PC laptop, I still use my Atari TT for all but the most demanding computing tasks.

Meanwhile, that spiffy PC laptop gives me fits at regular intervals because of the operating system that was provided with it. Windows 98 may indeed be the de-facto standard in the PC world, but the reasons for it are not what the casual observer might expect. Pressure, both subtle and not so subtle, has been exerted against and upon computer manufacturers and developers for years now.

Then a friend, an acquaintance really, started asking me if I might be interested in running Linux on the laptop. I had considered Linux for the Atari, but had never seemed to be able to get around to it.

Finally, I took the plunge and purchased Red Hat version 6.1 at a local office supply store. Of course, being so different from either the Windows operating system that I dislike, or the Atari operating system that I love, I had a bushel full of questions for this friend once I finally got Red Hat installed. To his credit, he answered all but the most elementary questions; leaving those for me to figure out on my own. Ah, the true essence of tutelage.

Once I was, if not proficient at least able to use the new OS, he asked me to write a bit about my feelings and Linux itself.

Now, if you are reading this, I figure that there's a ninety percent chance that you know more about Linux than I will for quite some time. So what could I possibly write about that would interest you? Well, how about the (mis)adventures of a Linux newbie? Sound like a good idea? Well, if you've used Linux for a while, you'll no doubt find at least a few things to make you nod and smile. If you haven't used Linux, it may give you an idea of what you might expect.

First of all, the commercial Red Hat package wasn't my first attempt at installing Linux on the PC laptop. My first attempt was with several Linux distributions purchased over the internet. Unfortunately, some of the laptop's hardware was new enough that the X server didn't recognize them. No matter what I tried, I could not get any of the GUIs or sound to work. Several email conversations with my learned friend (okay, okay, if you haven't figured it out by now, this friend I keep referring to is Scott Dowdle) confirmed that my problem was that my hardware was too new.

Linux got put on hold for several months while I waited for the appropriate snippits of code necessary for sound and graphics. In the meantime I continued to use the laptop with the OS provided. Finally the updated X server was out, and I quickly downloaded it. Now I knew exactly what it meant to be in over your head. I didn't have all of the files I needed and, even if I had, I had no idea of exactly what I needed to do. It seemed that no matter how much detail anyone well-versed in Linux went into there was always something taken for granted that would keep me from completing the upgrade successfully. To put it into perspective, try writing down the steps needed to tie your shoes. It's a simple thing that we all do every day. But having to go

into minute detail is really quite hard. Now imagine how much harder it is to detail what needs to be done to upgrade an operating system.

It is at this point that I finally broke down and purchased the commercial Red Hat package. It was the best thing I ever did. I don't want it to sound like I'm holding one distribution above another, but the commercial version gave me a printed manual and online support. Those two things made a big difference in my OS independence.

Red Hat 6.1 installed easily and solved one of my two problems. I could now make use of the built-in graphics card. All of the GUIs now worked as advertised and after modifying a configuration file or two I was tooling around at 1024 X 786 resolution with 32 bit color. The only thing left was the sound card. No matter what I tried, the sound card remained mute. The problem was the same one as before: The lack of a driver (I believe that in the Linux world they're called servers?) that understood exactly what my sound card was. There was a beta version of a driver for the card available, but installing it involved re-compiling the kernel with the proper module settings and all manner of other things that I'm simply not well-versed enough to deal with yet. I'm still new enough at Linux that it amazes me that you can do things like this. At any rate, I decided to wait and see if an easier way to get sound working presented itself. Heck, I didn't want to overdo it. I had already gotten better graphics than I had expected and I had even figured out how to put Linux on the same drive as Windows. I figured that I'd better quit while I was ahead... for at least the time being.

A friend sent me a copy of Corel Linux. From what I'd heard of it, I couldn't wait to try it out. Sound still didn't work and something about it seemed slower to me. Whether or not it was actually true, it colored my opinion. I also found it wanting in the number of applications and utilities that came with it. So back to Red Hat I went.

When Mandrake 7.0 was released I eagerly read the list of supported devices. Joy of joys, my sound card was supported! I bullied a friend into downloading the ISO image and burning a CD for me. It arrived in short order and I fired it up. I was quite impressed with the installation routines despite the one flaw I found (accounts other than Root created during installation are hobbled because permissions are set as "root"), I liked it almost instantly. Of course, I'm not saying that the installation went without a hitch. First, there was the fact that the sound server seemed to lock the machine up tight on bootup. It turned out that, while Red Hat was okay with leaving the BIOS boot default as "Windows", Mandrake demanded that it be set to "Other". Once that was changed, everything worked "as advertised". The first thing I did was to test out my new found sound ability by playing a Jimmy Buffett CD. Cheeseburger in Paradise, I think. As with anything you've worked for instead of being able to take it for granted, it was a great feeling to finally hear sound from Linux that wasn't from the default PC speaker.

That hurdle overcome, I now found that my PC card modem, which worked perfectly under Red Hat, was not even detected under Mandrake. I had assumed that, since they used the same kernel... the "Linux" part of any Linux distribution... that things like that would be safe. What I hadn't taken into account was that Mandrake, even though it is based upon Red Hat, was a more recent release , was using a slightly newer kernel version, and it did a few things a bit differently. It turned out that one of my pet peeves about Windows was at fault. A simple IRQ conflict was the cause. Three minutes with a text editor solved the problem and I

was off like a shot... again.

With everything on an even keel for the time being, I'm slowly but
surely learning more about this new operating system and some of the
things it can do. I have no doubt but that more interesting obstacles
will present themselves, but there's nothing wrong with that as long as
you can learn something from it.

So, in my opinion, is Linux for everyone? No. But for someone looking
for an incredibly stable, robust operating system supported by a
constantly growing number of developers, it's a good solid choice.

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                         A-ONE's Headline News
                   The Latest in Computer Technology News
                      Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

                Internet Tax Panel Lacks Pact Ahead of Dallas Meet

A blue ribbon panel reviewing how the United States should tax online
purchases appeared on Friday to be headed for failure just days before the
group holds its crucial final meeting in Dallas next week.

With time running out before the March 20-21 meeting, a flurry of
negotiations among members of the 19-member Advisory Commission on
Electronic Commerce has so far failed to reach a consensus on how -- if
at all -- to tax burgeoning electronic commerce and Internet access fees.

''I had optimism up until the latter part of yesterday. I do not have
optimism that we will have a delineating report," e-commerce commissioner
and Utah Gov. Michael Leavitt said during a telephone conference call with
reporters on Friday. "In fact it is likely we will have no report at all."

Leavitt's remarks came three days before the commission of three Clinton
administration officials, eight representatives from state and local
governments and eight from the electronic commerce industry vote at its
March 20-21 meeting.

A formal recommendation to Congress requires a supermajority vote, or 13
votes, of the commissioners in favor of proposals.

''At this point there appears that there will not be 13 votes for any
proposal," Leavitt said, without detailing why the talks fell apart.

Leavitt has said failing to tax electronic commerce would result in lost
revenue that could be used for education, roads and other services.

All sides in the debate agree that the current system is outmoded, but
there is little consensus about how to reform the convoluted laws and
rules that allow states, cities and other government bodies to set their
own sales tax rates.

Recent talks among members of the commission, which could pave the way for e-commerce taxation in the ``new economy," have gained momentum behind a ``business caucus" proposal.

The proposal would extend the current moratorium on new, multiple or discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce and Internet access fees for five years. It also called for the elimination of existing access taxes and a 3 percent federal tax on telecommunications.

The most controversial provision of the plan would exempt from taxation anything sold on the Internet in digital form, like downloadable computer software, an electronic book or musical recording. And the exemption would apply to ``tangible" equivalents, meaning no tax on sales of books, compact disks and movies, for example.

On Thursday, 12 commissioners, including Virginia Gov. Jim Gilmore, who chairs the commission and favors a ``tax-free zone" on the Internet, backed the proposal set by the business caucus, which includes AT&T, Time Warner Inc., America Online, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. and Gateway Inc.

There has speculation the three administration representatives will abstain from the voting. A White House spokesman said Friday a final decision had not been made.

But a vote from the Republican Utah governor would have achieved the supermajority requirement laid out by the Internet Tax Freedom Act, which was passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in October 1998.

Without Leavitt, who is against Internet access charges but favors taxing all online transactions, any chance of an agreement seems doomed.

Leavitt says he wants a ``level playing field," siding with brick-and-mortar stores, that charge customers the sales tax rate where they are located. Online companies, like mail order catalog retailers, are not required to collect sales taxes unless they have a physical presence in the customer's area.

Experts say that even if the commission could reach a consensus on electronic commerce taxation, Congress would not necessarily approve the panel's recommendations.

``The only binding nature is that Congress needs to act on them if they receive a formal recommendation from the commission," said Kent Johnson, an Internet taxation consultant at KPMG. ``It doesn't mean they have to pass it."

Lawmakers could throw in amendments, alter the recommendations, or in the heat of an election year, put off the entire matter until next year.

``All sorts of things could happen" Johnson said.

Panel Endorses Web Access Tax Ban

Congress should permanently ban taxes on access to the Internet and repeal a century-old telephone tax, and lawmakers should refrain for now from trying to apply state sales taxes to purchases online, a federal e-commerce panel decided Monday.

A majority of the 19-member Advisory Commission on Electronic Commerce endorsed a proposal from its business members that also would extend by five years a moratorium expiring in October 2001 on new Internet taxes. The proposal also would encourage state and local governments to simplify their sales tax systems.

''This is definitely a no-new-taxes-on-the-Internet proposal, but it's not a no-sales-taxes-ever proposal," said David Pottruck, president of Charles Schwab Corp. ''It's a starting point."

The proposal also asks Congress to define what the Supreme Court meant in a 1993 ruling that requires a business based outside a state's borders to have a physical presence, or ''nexus," in the state before sales taxes apply to remote sellers - catalog, Internet or telephone. The plan suggests that such things as Internet service providers and World Wide Web pages should never be considered a physical presence.

Several state and local government representatives on the panel objected to that section and to language exempting sale of digital products such as books and music, as well as their physical counterparts sold in stores.

Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk, a Democrat, called that ''a huge money grab for the business members of this commission." The panel includes top executives of AT&T, America Online, Time Warner and MCI Worldcom.

''I don't think business is at all grabbing for money," responded Robert Pittman, president and chief operating officer at AOL. ''It's less about taxes than it is about where you deploy your resources."

The vote marked a defeat for most of the state and local officials on the commission, who wanted a clear statement supporting equal sales tax application to goods sold in stores or via the Internet. Business members said if states simplified their thousands of different sales tax rates, the tax eventually could apply to the Web.

''I don't think any form of distribution should have an advantage over any other form of distribution," said AT&T Chairman Michael Armstrong.

The panel planned another meeting Tuesday to wrap up its work, which is due April 21 in Congress. Given its freeform rules, it was possible that the commission could endorse one of several other positions, or that a two-thirds majority could be achieved in last-minute negotiations over sales taxes.

''We are awfully close to getting the required consensus," Kirk said.

In Monday's vote, the six business members gained support of the panel's chairman, Gov. Jim Gilmore, R-Va., and others who have taken fierce anti-tax positions throughout the panel's 10-month life.

All three Clinton administration members of the panel abstained on the business proposal, along with Govs. Gary Locke, D-Wash., and Mike Leavitt, R-Utah, and other local government officials. Kirk cast the lone vote against. The final vote was 11 in favor, one against and seven abstentions.

Aside from fears that increasing e-commerce will cut deeply into $150 billion in annual sales tax collections and threaten state and local services, opponents protested a ruling by Gilmore that the panel's final

report to Congress did not have to gain a two-thirds vote to be forwarded. Gilmore said that while formal recommendations needed those 13 votes, Congress deserved to know the items that achieved simple majorities.

''We've just changed the rules at the 11th hour," Kirk said.

But House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., have said Congress would take a look at whatever the majority produces as long as it doesn't suggest tax increases.

''The best judgment is not always a consensus judgment," Lott said in a letter to Gilmore. ''I hop the commission's report will inform us of proposals that gain at least majority support."

The Clinton administration also opposes outright repeal of the 3 percent telephone excise tax, which was imposed originally to finance the Spanish-American War in 1898. The cost of $52 billion over 10 years ''must be weighed against other important priorities" in government, Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat said Monday.

U.S. Seeks Serious Microsoft Remedy

Assistant Attorney General Joel Klein, whose department is in the middle of mediation talks to settle the landmark Microsoft Corp. antitrust case, said Wednesday any solution must match the firm's serious anti-competitive acts.

''The findings of fact reveal a serious pattern of anti-competitive conduct," Klein told a congressional hearing in reference to findings handed down by a federal judge. ''I think that a remedy ought to be commensurate with those practices."

District Court Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson found last year that Microsoft abused monopoly power over the Windows operating system for personal computers, hurting customers, competitors and other companies.

Klein made clear there was no certainty any settlement would be reached.

''Settlement is better than litigation but the settlement would have to be, of course, appropriate to deal with the concerns that the Court documented in its opinion," he said.

The most serious possible remedy mentioned by commentators is to break the company into pieces, as Standard Oil was broken up after a 1911 Supreme Court decision finding it had used illegal means to dominate the oil industry. Shareholders benefited richly from the break-up of Standard Oil as its progeny thrived.

At Jackson's suggestion, U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Richard Posner in Chicago is conducting mediation talks, acting in a private capacity.

If the talks succeed, then the trial ends. If the talks fail, then Jackson will hand down his conclusions of law.

Jackson is expected to conclude that Microsoft violated the nation's antitrust law, which would lead to a third phase of the trial to determine the appropriate remedies. The trial would possibly end around October.

Klein declined to comment on the progress of the confidential talks, noting only that his department was ``in the middle" of them.

A Microsoft spokesman also declined to comment on the talks, citing the same reasons as Klein. The spokesman had no comment on Klein's remarks.

Microsoft Talks Near End, Prospects Unclear

Large differences remain between Microsoft and government negotiators as settlement talks in the antitrust case against the No. 1 software company near an end, an industry source said Thursday.

Mediation talks have been under way to settle the case since late last year, after District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson found that Microsoft Corp. abused monopoly power in its Windows computer operating system, harming customers, consumers and other companies.

Jackson is expected to rule soon on whether those actions violated the nation's antitrust laws as alleged by the Justice Department and 19 states.

Two newspapers on Thursday carried reports quoting people close to the talks saying a deal between the two sides was possible and broadly outlined what settlement terms might emerge.

Even so, big differences remain, according to a person not directly involved in the case but briefed on the discussions.

``There is no new serious turn in the negotiations," the industry source said. ``Substantial differences remain between the parties."

The newspapers said any settlement would require restrictions on Microsoft's business practices, rather than breaking up the company.

Although both remedies involving restructuring the company and restricting its conduct have been discussed in the earlier stage of the settlement talks, Microsoft has repeatedly insisted that it would not accept a break-up.

The mediator in the talks, U.S. Court of Appeals Judge Richard Posner in Chicago, acting in a private capacity, has told both sides that they must not speak to reporters about what is going on in the talks.

Representatives of both the Justice Department and Microsoft condemned the leaks.

Gina Talamona, a spokeswoman for the Justice Department, said: ``Whoever is making these kinds of statements is just engaged in a public relations effort that should not be taken seriously."

Mark Murray, a spokesman for Microsoft, said: ``We're not going to comment on anything related to mediation. We think it's inappropriate for anyone to be commenting on anything related to this confidential mediation."

Iowa Attorney General Tom Miller and Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal declined to comment at a meeting of state attorneys general in Washington.

If no agreement is reached and Jackson issues conclusions of law unfavorable to Microsoft, Jackson would move to a third phase of the trial to set remedies. That would be expected to end some time in October.

Government Retreats From Microsoft Split

The Justice Department appears to be retreating from demands in secret negotiations to break up the Microsoft Corp., a concession that would dramatically improve chances for settling the landmark antitrust case.

Microsoft has indicated it will not accept any settlement that divides the company, and U.S. Assistant Attorney General Joel I. Klein believes such a punishment may not be necessary to adequately restrain what the trial judge characterized as Microsoft's monopoly power over the technology industry, said two people close to the case, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The move represents a fundamental shift by the federal government, which largely decided months ago to press for a breakup while anticipating a strongly favorable ruling from U.S. District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson in the coming weeks. It also puts Justice's stance at odds with some state attorneys general, who believe that only the harshest punishment is appropriate.

New York's attorney general, Eliot Spitzer, on Thursday praised Klein's handling of the antitrust trial but acknowledged that past cooperation between states and Justice ''doesn't mean we're going to agree on every piece, every remedy."

Spitzer, who declined to comment on settlement talks, described a ''healthy dynamic" among the 19 states and Justice debating punishments.

Antitrust experts offered several explanations why Justice now may be inclined to accept lesser punishment than a breakup as part of a settlement, even though the trial judge strongly has hinted he will rule that Microsoft violated antitrust laws.

Punishment worked out under settlement could apply immediately to Microsoft - even before the next election - without the uncertainty over the outcome of lengthy appeals. Government lawyers also could negotiate a punishment broadly enough they would apply to controversial practices that were not part of the current trial, such as Microsoft's dominance in Internet ''server" software and in the market for word processors and spreadsheets.

''What Justice has to balance is the benefits in the short run of having a settlement that might apply arguably to some things more long term that haven't been litigated, against the more certain relief of a structural divestiture that Microsoft would oppose," said Glenn B. Manishin, an antitrust lawyer who advocates breaking up Microsoft.

The Justice Department also faces an apparent dearth of support among the public and the technology industry to break up Microsoft, as well as active debate among some attorneys general on their best course.

Jackson bluntly told government lawyers in November that he would ''not like to have to deal with divergent points of view" on proposed punishments. Ohio's Betty Montgomery, for example, said earlier that lawyers should seek prohibitions on Microsoft's conduct, not a breakup.

Microsoft has indicated it would never agree to any settlement that included a breakup; the company's chief executive, Steve Ballmer, called those proposals ''reckless and irresponsible."

The first surprise suggestions that a settlement might be possible came earlier this month after prominent financial analysts met privately with Microsoft's new financial officer.

Walter Winnitzki of Chase Hambrecht & Quist said afterward that he believed ''there was a near-term opportunity to have this settled, some language being given that they wouldn't have any change in culture or structure."

But there also remain signs of continued acrimony. Sounding far from placated, Klein told a Senate subcommittee this week that any remedy ''ought to be commensurate" with Microsoft's aggressive business practices.

Also, Microsoft e-mailed a newsletter to thousands of subscribers Wednesday harshly critical of the government. It described as ''unseemly at best" Justice's efforts to persuade industry leaders to support a breakup. It also derided breakup plans as ''an extreme and reckless resolution to the government's antitrust suit."

New Pentium IIIs Hit The Street

Intel ships 850MHz and 866MHz Pentium IIIs. For consumers, the chips will make for high-performance PCs that cost about $2,000.

Intel Corp. Monday rolled out a pair of new Pentium III processors.

The Santa Clara, Calif., company's expected announcement proclaims it is now shipping its 850MHz and 866MHz Pentium III chips.

For consumers, the chips will make for high performance PCs that cost about $2,000. They are significantly less expensive than 1GHz (1,000MHz) Pentium III PCs, which began shipping in the past week from Dell Computer Corp., IBM Corp. and Hewlett-Packard Co.

Intel however, appears to be still somewhat out of breath from the gigahertz race with rival Advanced Micro Devices Inc. Intel and AMD each announced their 1,000MHz or 1GHz desktop PC chips, two weeks ago.

While Intel officials say that the 850MHz and 866MHz chips are readily available, the high-speed Intel chips will be tough to come by at first.

Dell, for example, is quoting customers 12 to 15-day lead times on Dimension desktop PCs with the new chips.

Customers should expect the models with the 866MHz Pentium III chip to have lead times of about 12 days, while PCs with the 850MHz Pentium III are expected to ship in about 15 days, a Dell spokeswoman said. By way of comparison, an 800MHz Dimension could be delivered in just four days, she said.

"We expect lead times (on the 850MHz and 866MHz chips) to go to our standard three to five business days within a few weeks," said the Dell

spokeswoman. Intel "just doesn't have quantities right now."

The main difference between the two chips is in the bus speed. The 850MHz Pentium III supports a 100MHz system bus, while the 866MHz Pentium III supports a 133MHz bus. The system bus provides a data pipeline between the processor and system components, such as memory.

Different bus speeds mean the two chips will be used with different chip sets, and will likely see different markets. While the 850MHz will be used with Intel's 440BX or possibly its 810E chip set, the 866MHz will be paired with Intel's performance 820 chip set or its forthcoming 815.

Pricing on Dell's 866MHz Dimension XPS B866r starts at $2,149. The desktop comes configured with the 866MHz chip, 128MB of Rambus Direct RAM, a 20GB hard drive and 17-inch monitor. Pricing for the XPS T850 starts at $1,949, which includes the 850MHz Pentium III, 128MB of RAM, a 20GB hard drive and 17-inch monitor.

Pricing on the processors themselves, are $765 for the 850MHz and $776 for the 866MHz, according to Intel. These prices are for 1,000 unit quantities.

A 933MHz Pentium III chip is also forthcoming from Intel. However, it's not clear when the chip will ship.

Rival AMD announced its 900MHz and 950MHz, along with its 1GHz Athlon, on March 6.

BlueLight.com Signs On 1 Million Customers

America loves a blue-light special.

In just six weeks, Kmart has signed up 1 million customers to its free Internet service, making it the fastest-growing Internet service provider on the market, the company announced today.

One reason for the blistering growth at BlueLight.com, Kmart's Internet arm, is that many of its customers are firmly rooted in the middle class and are just joining the Internet revolution, executives say.

Analysts say it's a smart move to tap into Middle America, the next big wave of e-commerce shoppers who are looking for a way onto the Net. By offering free Internet access, Kmart builds an online customer base.

"Kmart is going to be extending their brand name to a mass market," said Zia Wigder, an analyst at Jupiter Communications. "Kmart wants to be in their face every day."

Kmart, which has 2,200 stores and has more than 30 million customers every day, has been handing out the free software on disks at checkout counters.

The Kmart Web page will automatically greet customers when they log on.

The free ISP is the result of a deal struck in December among Kmart, Yahoo and Softbank Venture Capital. It was one of the earliest deals between a large Internet company and a brick-and-mortar retailer to offer Internet access.

Microsoft has partnered with Tandy, and America Online has struck deals with Wal-Mart, Circuit City and Sears, but those Internet access programs are not free.

Unlike most ISPs that rely on marketing or partnerships to distribute software, Kmart used its vast network of brick-and-mortar stores. Roughly 80 percent of Americans live within six miles of a Kmart.

In addition to the huge number of customers, the companies said they also had altruistic goals of helping bridge the so-called digital divide.

"We wanted to enable Kmart customers to make their everyday purchases on the Web," said Drew Lanham, Yahoo's senior director of business development. "And to make their life more convenient."

Studies show that Internet users have evolved from a mostly male, affluent and well-educated audience to a much larger group that is less educated, less affluent and includes more women, according to The Boston Consulting Group, an Internet research firm.

And while they are less affluent, they still represent tremendous buying power.

"Yes we want to make money, but we also believe that everybody should have the same access to the knowledge the Internet provides," said Fran Maier, vice president of marketing at BlueLight.

Authorities Target Online Scammers

Pyramid schemes, outrageous claims and other schemes draw the attention of international law enforcement.

Law enforcement officials from 27 countries and 45 states have conducted a massive sweep of the Internet searching for "get-rich-quick" schemes and scams, the Federal Trade Commission said Thursday.

More than 1,600 sites were uncovered in the "Get-Rich-Quick.con" program, one of several "surfs" the agency has held looking for problems and crimes on the Net.

The latest sweep hooked up law enforcement officials across state and national borders, and involved hundreds of researchers who scoured the Net of scam artists.

"We want them to know that the borderless Internet marketplace is not a free zone for fraud," said Jodie Bernstein, director of the FTC Bureau of Consumer Protection. "Though we speak different languages on the subject of Internet fraud, we speak with one voice. Our message is: Con artists will not threaten the safety of the Net."

Some of the schemes promised users rewards such as "surf the Net and earn $100 an hour," he said. Authorities also found a variety of pyramid schemes, outrageous product claims and outright fraud.

The sites are sent e-mail warnings, and documentation of the sites is provided to law enforcement agencies in the various jurisdictions, which

will be able to further investigate, and press charges if necessary.

Bernstein said the agencies could begin filing cases in June or July.

"As an old prosecutor I'm looking forward to phase two. Once we've investigated, as the old sheriff would do, we're going to run them out of town, and run them off the Web," said Drew Edmondson, Attorney General of Oklahoma. "And where appropriate we'll put them in jail."

It came as no surprise to speakers at Thursday's press conference that they had migrated onto the Web. About half of the U.S. Postal Services' mail fraud investigations begin as online solicitations, said Lawrence Maxwell, inspector in charge, fraud prohibited mailings and forfeiture.

It's easy for con artists to target consumers "in an age dominated by a Who Wants to be a Millionaire mentality," said Richard Walker, director, division of enforcement Securities and Exchange Commission.

                        WebTV Wages War On 'Virus'

Macro code in e-mail signatures causes some users to inadvertently flood WebTV news groups.

An HTML command that acts like a computer virus caused headaches for Internet-over-TV provider WebTV Networks Inc. this weekend.

While not destructive, the so-called "Flood Virus" -- in reality, a line of HTML macro code -- uses a security hole to attach itself to a user's e-mail signature file and send messages to certain newsgroups whenever that user sends an e-mail.

The result: Several of WebTV's newsgroups -- listed in the macro code -- have been flooded by spurious postings, making them essentially unreadable. By the weekend, 14 users had complained to WebTV.

WebTV has not taken the attack, essentially a prank, sitting down. The company's network administrators are monitoring the service's newsgroups 24 hours a day to minimize the effect of the virus.

In addition, the company has promised to patch the network hole by the end of this week.

While the service provider refuses to call the HTML sleight-of-hand a "virus," the fact that the code spreads itself to other WebTV users fits the definition.

The macro code uses WebTV-specific HTML commands known as "WebTV tricks" to copy itself to users' signatures and forward copies of any mail sent to certain WebTV news groups.

The virus cannot affect non-WebTV users, and can only infect users of the WebTV Classic system.

While one report claimed almost 600,000 users could potentially be affected, the company claimed only a fraction of its 1 million users were susceptible to the hack.

Net4TV, a WebTV community follower, reported the "e-mail signature hack" a week ago, though at the time, the viral properties of the hack were not known.

"Normally, the 'WebTV tricks' only work in the parts of the browser that WebTV controls," said Brian Bock, editor-in-chief of the online Web site. "What happened was there's a bug in the browser that let the code affect users' signatures."

While the virus does not damage users' data, it has certainly trashed WebTV's previous claims that its service is immune to viruses. At press time, however, the company had not released a statement.

The company has not yet tried to find out who began spreading the malicious code.

Microsoft Says Investigating Possible Windows Leak

Software giant Microsoft Corp. said on Wednesday it was investigating whether a future version of its Windows operating system had been posted to several Web sites where people could download it for free.

The software was a rudimentary version of Windows code named ''Whistler" that targets home consumers, according to a report on ActiveWin, a Web site that follows Microsoft news.

Microsoft hasn't revealed many details, but Whistler is scheduled for release in 2001 to replace the upcoming Windows Millennium, also called Windows Me, due out later this year.

Another technology Web site, BetaNews, said Whistler was made available for download on several college and Internet sites. It was unclear how many people downloaded the software.

A Microsoft spokesman declined to confirm if the software had been posted, saying only, ''We're looking into it."

With more than a year to go before its release, the final version of Whistler will likely contain many changes and bug fixes from the current test versions.

Whistler is supposed to bridge the gap between consumer Windows, like Windows 95 and 98, which are based on older DOS technology, and business Windows, like 2000, which is built using the more stable NT code. Whistler will be the first consumer-oriented platform to use NT technology.

Windows Me will be the Redmond, Wash.-based company's biggest product release since it unveiled the Windows 2000 platform for businesses last month.

Jimmy Page/Black Crowes Album Takes Flight on Net

It's one of the hottest new rock albums of the year. But you won't find it

in stores.

''Live at the Greek" is the recorded document of former Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page and the Black Crowes' joint concerts last fall in Los Angeles, part of a six-date mini-tour that included shows in New York City and Worcester, Mass.

The album is available exclusively via the Web site http://www.musicmaker.com, which is selling it in a pre-selected two-CD package or allowing fans to download customized versions of the album.

There are 19 songs to choose from, a collection of Led Zeppelin favorites and covers of blues chestnuts and rock oldies such as Fleetwood Mac's ''Oh Well" and ''Shapes of Things" from another of Page's old bands, the Yardbirds.

The unconventional sales method hasn't dampened fans' appetite for the music. In fact, so many people tried to buy copies when ''Live at the Greek" went on sale Feb. 29 that it temporarily crashed the site -- which also is slated to carry a live album by the Who later this spring.

''It's really great to do it this way, because we don't have to compromise anything, which we'd have done through the regular channel of releases," says two-time Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee Page. Hooked up with the Crowes for the fall jaunt after asking them to perform with him at a charity gig in London the previous July.

Crowes frontman Chris Robinson says several labels were interested in releasing the album. But he feels the Internet method is more true to the nature of the collaboration.

''It wasn't a project that someone at a record company put together to make money," Robinson says. ''We were doing it for music's sake, doing it for people who love music. So I think it's best that we put it out in a new way, without any hassles and without (record company) guys telling us what to do and without trying to beat it over people's heads."

For the musicians, ''Live at the Greek" is a souvenir of an outing they enjoyed as much as the relatively few fans who were able to see it in person and the critics who generally heaped praise upon the shows.

The engagement gave Page an opportunity to work live again after his chief collaborator, former Led Zeppelin singer Robert Plant, went on hiatus from their work together.

''I felt we had one good album at least left inside us, and we should have done that," Page, 56, says of his partnership with Plant. ''I can't keep trying to motivate somebody if they just definitely don't seem to want to know."

Instead, he worked with the Crowes, who, he notes, ''really committed themselves to really learning these numbers and understanding all the subtleties of them." Some Crowes songs were performed, too, but American/Columbia Records, the group's former label, barred them from being included in the set.

Page points particularly to the song ''Ten Years Gone," which, like a number of other Led Zeppelin selections the assemblage performed, received its most faithful live presentation ever thanks to the presence of three guitarists -- Page and the Crowes' Rich Robinson and Audley Freed.

``When we played 'Ten Years Gone' with Led Zeppelin onstage, it was one guitar trying to do its best to sort of fill in for a guitar army that was on the record," Page explains. ``All of a sudden I was in the middle of this ambient thing, all these guitar harmonies. All this music was living. It was a fantastic experience."

The Crowes certainly agree. ``There's always been a pretty healthy dose of Zeppelinesque qualities to all of our records," says Chris Robinson, 33. ``You're talking about these archetypal, rock 'n' roll culture songs, y'know? You don't want to (mess) 'em up, man."

But younger brother Rich Robinson insists the Crowes were not intimidated by working with one of their heroes.

``I'm humble in the face of Jimmy and his work and all the amazing things he's done," the 30-year-old guitarist says. "But I'm also proud and confident in what we do. I knew deep down that, of any band, we're really one of the only ones that could have pulled this off well. And when we started playing the stuff ourselves ... it just became more apparent."

The question now is whether Page and the Crowes will do it again. There are strong rumors of summer tours, including one that would pair them with the Who, and of joint recording projects. But Page and the Robinsons are being discreet.

``There's discussions," Page says. ``There's many things that have been hinted at. We need the chance to sit down and have a good conversation about it. When the time comes, we'll let everybody know what we're doing."

In the meantime, both parties are pursuing their own endeavors. Besides checking off on a new Led Zeppelin collection, ``Latter Days ... The Best of, Vol. 2," Page says he has quite a few songs written that were intended to be worked on with Plant; he's now ascertaining what he wants to do with that material.

The Crowes are working on a new recording contract as well as songs for their next album. The Robinsons say they have nearly 20 new songs written, and Chris describes them as "definitely very moody and intense ... really honest, really emotional.

``And you can definitely hear Mr. Page's influence on us."

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